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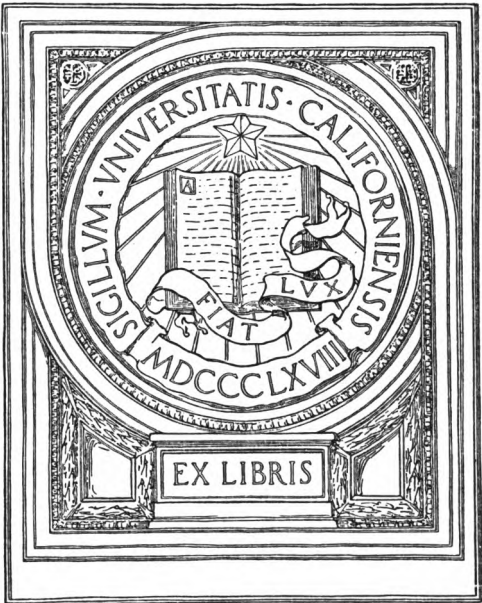
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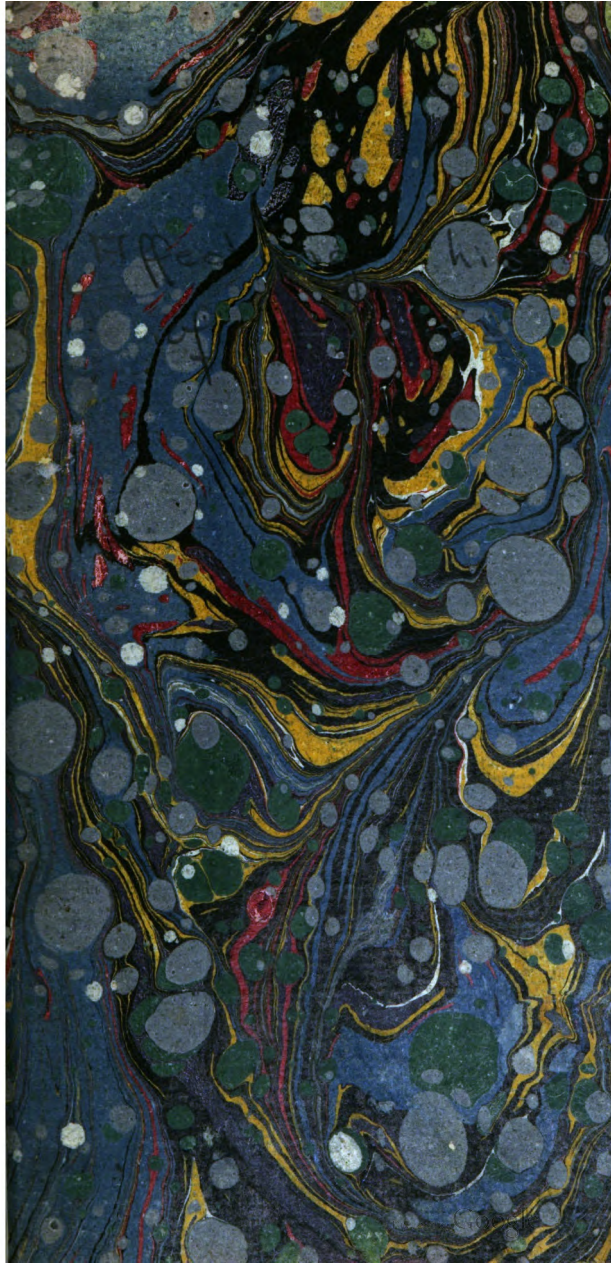


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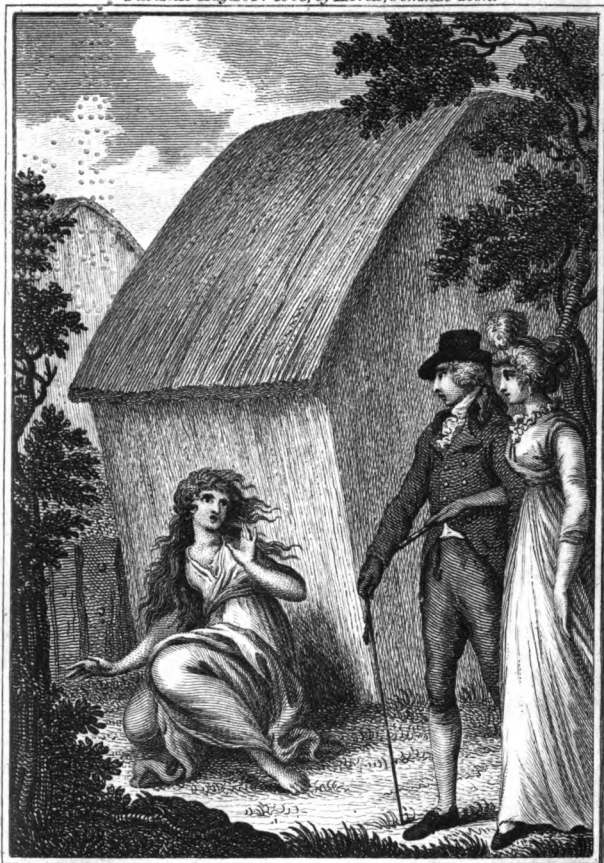


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Published August 1st 1803, by A. Neil, Somerset Town.



Van Aken del.

Turnbull sc.

*'Dishevelled so! her beautiful tresses fly,
'And the wild glance now fills the staring eye.'*

THE
AFFECTING HISTORY
OF
LOUISA,

THE
WANDERING MANIAC,

OR,

“ Lady of the Hay-Stack; ”

So called, from having taken up her Residence under *that*
Shelter, in the Village of

BOURTON, NEAR BRISTOL,

STATE OF MELANCHOLY DERANGEMENT;

and supposed to be

A NATURAL DAUGHTER

OF

FRANCIS I. EMPEROR of GERMANY.

A REAL TALE OF WOE.

On this History Mr. Boaden founded the favourite Play of
“ The MAID of BRISTOL.”

London :

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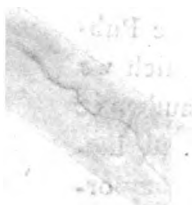
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ADVERTISEMENT.

MR. BOADEN having, with so much success, dramatised the following interesting Tale, under the title of "*The Maid of Bristol*," induced us to present the Public with the original Narrative; which we are enabled to do, from the most authentic documents.—It is so strictly and literally true, that it does not require any ornament from fiction, or any embellishment from language. Those for whom truth has any charms, and who can commiserate the calamities of a fellow-creature, will feel for poor LOUISA, whose history is here related with the utmost simplicity, and the closest adherence to fact.

M13477



AFFECTING HISTORY

OF

LOUISA,

&c. &c.

SOME few years ago, a young woman stopped at the village of Bourton, near Bristol, and begged the refreshment of a little milk. There was something so attractive in her whole appearance, as to engage the attention of all around her.—— She was young and beautiful; her manners graceful and elegant, and her countenance interesting to the last degree. She was alone—a stranger—and in extreme distress—yet she uttered no complaint, nor used any arts to excite compassion!— Her whole deportment and conversation bore visible marks of superior breeding, but there was a wildness and want of consistency in all she said and did. As she could not be induced even to make known her name, she was distinguished by that of LOUISA.

All day she wandered about in search of a place to lay her wretched head, and at night actually took up her lodging under an old haystack. The neighbouring ladies remonstrated with her on the danger of so exposed a situation, but in vain; their bounty supplied her with the necessaries of life, but neither prayers nor any other means could induce her to sleep in a house.

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~~As she at times discovered evident symptoms of~~ insanity, she was at length conveyed to Bristol, and confined in St. Peter's Hospital in that city; from whence, however, she soon made her escape, and with all the speed her small remains of strength allowed, flew to her favourite hay-stack, though it was six miles from the place of her confinement.—Her rapture was inexpressible on finding herself at liberty, and once more safe beneath this miserable shelter.

Hardship, sickness, intense cold, and extreme misery now gradually injured her health, and impaired her beauty, but she was yet an interesting figure: she had an uncommon sweetness and delicacy in her air and manner; and was above all that vanity so common to her sex; for she would neither wear nor accept of any gaudy dress or ornament, but hung them on the bushes as beneath her attention. Her way of life was the most harmless and inoffensive that can be imagined: every fine morning she walked around the village, conversed with the poor children, made them little presents of such things as were given her, and received others in return; but she would take no food except milk or tea, or the most simple diet.

No means had been left unattempted by the neighbouring ladies to prevail on her to live in a house, but her constant reply was, *that trouble and misery dwelt in houses, and that there was no happiness but in liberty and fresh air.*" She was at length, with great reluctance, removed to the village of Bitton, in Gloucestershire, and supported by subscription, under the management of the benevolent Miss Hannah Moore and her sisters.

From a certain peculiarity of expression, with a slight foreign tincture in her pronunciation, some have

have been led to conjecture she was not of this country; and various attempts were made to draw, from this circumstance, some knowledge of her origin.

A respectable gentleman in Bristol, who has favoured us with some authentic memoirs, and who, from motives of humanity, visited poor Louisa, while under the care of Mr. Henderson, keeper of a private mad-house near Bristol, spoke to her in French. She appeared uneasy, restless, and embarrassed; but when he addressed her in German, her emotion was too great to be suppressed; she turned from him, and burst into tears! Having asked her a question in the same language, she answered in English; but as if she had been hurried into an imprudence, she artfully changed the subject, and denied having understood what had been said to her in German.

"I should have conceived her," says the writer, "to be about five-and-twenty; and notwithstanding the injuries which her situation and mode of life must inevitably have occasioned in her looks, she had still a very pleasing countenance. Interesting it certainly was in a high degree; but it is not easy to say how much this impression was to be attributed to the previous knowledge of her story. She had fine, expressive, black eyes and eye-brows; her complexion was wan, but not sickly; her under jaw projected a little, and I fancied I could distinguish something of the Austrian lip; but it was not decidedly marked. Her nose had nothing particular; her hair was very dark, if not black, and in length about a year and a half's growth, not being thick, but coming down on her forehead; her arm and hand were delicate, with small long fingers.

"Upon being addressed, she lifted up her eyes,
and

and having articulated some incoherent words, she composed herself again. Being told "that the gentleman was a friend who came to see her," she smiled, and moved her under lip for some time, without pronouncing a word. This practice, which exhibited more of the idiot than any other part of her behaviour, she soon left off, when we began to draw her into a sort of conversation.

"Where is papa?"—"Is mama come for me, to take me away?" were the first words she uttered, which were frequently reiterated during my stay. By addressing her in a strain of familiar kindness, many replies were drawn from her, and she seemed gratified by my joining in her laugh; which, under any other circumstances, would be esteemed a very pleasant one.

"The mode of her speaking English, though imperfect, I could not absolutely pronounce to be that of a foreigner, but rather that of an infant; as she frequently omitted the connecting particles, and sometimes made use of childish epithets.

"My first entreaty was, that she would reach out her hand, in order that, by this kind of salutation, I might gain an opportunity of observing the grace with which she had been said to move it. There was a delicacy in her manner of giving it; and I had farther occasion to remark, that her motions and attitude (as far as her posture would admit) were those of a person who had been in no common line of life. She obliged me to repeat a question several times, before she would return an answer; not because she did not comprehend it, but either from indifference, which gradually diminished, or wariness to avoid being entrapped by leading questions, against which, it was very evident, in spite of her insanity, that she was constantly endeavouring to guard; though now and then,

then, when her spirits were raised, she was led into replies that threw a glimmering light on what she had laboured to conceal. This mysterious conduct, which was probably at first the effect of design and resolution, had now become habitual. On seeing a carriage pass, drawn by four horses, she exclaimed, "My father's coach was drawn by eight horses."

"Some of the many unconnected questions and answers which passed, are as follow; but it must be premised, that instead of adverting to what I asked her, she more usually talked of "Mama's coming to take her away," and other sentences, which, as I was informed by those about her, she was in the habit of uttering.

"Do you find it cold, Louisa?" (the door standing open.)

"No, 'tis warm here."

"Do you love the fire?"

"No, no, fire nasty," (with an expressive frown.)

"I am your friend, Louisa; and am come to take you away from hence. Will you go with me!"

"Yes," (with emotion) "but mama must come and bring me clothes; I must be dressed," (pointing her hands towards her neck and shoulders, and moving her fingers about.)

"We shall go in a coach and four horses, and we will make them gallop; and the people shall admire us as we pass along."

Here she burst into a fit of laughter and a sort of exultation, as if enjoying the idea of parade.

"And we shall let all the glasses down."

"No, that will be too cold."

By this answer, and other minute circumstances, she appeared to have a proper notion of a carriage, and to have been used to one.

"But

"But where shall we drive to?"

"Home!"

"But where, to what home?"

"Oh, here and there, backwards and forwards, all round about," (waving her hand.)

"Shall we, LOUISA, (pointedly) shall we drive to Bohemia?"

"That is papa's own country."

This remarkable answer came from her in a perfectly fair and direct manner, after she had been in a train of talking and laughing, and when she might be supposed to be off her guard. I took the opportunity of joining in her laugh, and asking other questions before her spirits had time to subside, or her wariness returned; but my design was not successful. She would instantly assume a serious, and even a fullen look, when she thought my interrogations impertinent. Sometimes she evaded them in a different manner. She talked much about a sister. I offered to call her—

"But how shall I address her? What is her name?"

"She will tell you when she comes," (with a significant air.)

"Is your sister like you, Louisa?"—She laughed.

"If she is like you, she is very pretty."

A faint blush came over her cheek, and casting down her eyes with a coquetish smile, she tried to hide her face in the straw of her bed.

"When spoken to in French, she seemed, but not very decidedly, to understand it; and particularly, when desired, in that language, to give her hand at parting, she reached it out; but the corresponding action on my part might possibly have induced her to do this, independently of the request; certainly, however, when addressed in French, she

she did not give less signs of intelligence than when spoken to in English, nor did she express by her countenance any surprise at the change of language. She did not, however, speak a word of French. I tried a few words of German, at which she burst into immoderate fits of laughter, as if at my awkward pronunciation of it, and misapplication of words. No French phrase addressed to her had the same effect.

"When the discourse ran on the subject of travelling, I mentioned a variety of towns in Europe, but without being able to perceive any concomitant emotion. When asked if she liked Brussels, she seemed to contract a look of displeasure or disgust; and I think the same also when Brussels-lace was mentioned to her. I talked about crossing the sea, and of sea-sickness. No particular words dropped from her, but she appeared to grow serious and reserved, and to discourage the subject.

"I was informed that she had a particular passion for bracelets and miniature pictures, but a most sovereign contempt for every other ornament. Of a Queen Anne's half-crown she appeared vastly fond; she has sometimes desired to have one sewed on a black ribbon; said it much resembled her mama; would wear it on her arm, and kiss it with great delight.

"She seldom arose from her bed of straw; on that she lay very quiet; but if they attempted to dress her, or put her on a comfortable bed, she became outrageous. She did not require to be treated with harshness, as these fits of resentment only arose from being disturbed from her indolent repose. She often amused herself with shaping her blanket into the imitation of a royal robe.

"Will you have your hair dressed, Louisa?" said I.

"Oh,

"Oh, no, no," (with a look of indignation, which was also repeated when I talked of powder) "my hair must be thus," (pointing to and laying delicate hold of the ringlets on her forehead) "and when I go home, it will flow down my back and shoulders, or come down here," pointing to them.

"This last was expressed partly by action and partly by words, the particular phrase, excepting in short replies, not being always exactly collected, though her idea was perfectly intelligible.

"The term *papa* she applied in a vague and incoherent manner; sometimes to the gentleman (Mr. Henderson) who had the charge of her, and at times to some unknown person at a distance, to whose home she talked of going.

"A foreign lady, resident in Bristol, once went to see Louisa, when she was under the hay-stack. With her, I understand, she talked German, and told her she had lived at Sleswick; had been in a convent, and escaped with her lover. This was the only moment in which any thing of her native language or country escaped her. By some misfortune, this lady (who was genteel and well-bred) was reduced to be a superintending servant in the very house where Louisa was confined, and had the chief care of her. Louisa, remembering the former confidant she had made her, could never be prevailed on to renew the conversation, though she frequently spoke short sentences to her in German, particularly if she wanted tea, or had any other favour to ask.

"From this lady I learnt, that poor Louisa had the marks of a very large wound on the lower part of her head, behind the ear, and of a large scar upon the breast, which seemed to have been occasioned by a very considerable wound.

"Books have been left in the room, but although

though she has been narrowly watched, she has never been observed to open any of them. Being once pressed to read, she cried, " No, no; reading is study, and study makes me mad."

" There was a peculiarity in her enunciation, approaching, but not amounting, to a lisp, or as when the tongue slightly touches the under row of teeth. Her voice was soft and feminine, and I never heard her loud, except in her fits of laughter. Her humours were said to be various; to me she was good-natured, and I might almost say affable. After the door was locked on her, I could hear her laughing. In spite of the misery of her condition, she seemed not to be unhappy."

Shortly after poor Louisa had been discovered in this country, the following Narrative made its appearance on the Continent, and was read with great avidity. There are so many striking coincidences contained therein with the foregoing, that warrant the probability of La Fruëlen and Louisa being the same; especially, when we consider that the scars described on each, exactly corresponded; with other circumstances, sufficiently corroborative of the identity; and of course, that Louisa was a natural daughter of Francis I. Emperor of Germany. — The History is exceedingly interesting in itself; we shall therefore present our readers with the Translation :

IN the summer of the year 1768, the Count de Cobenzel, Imperial Minister at Brussels, received a letter from a lady at Bourdeaux; the writer requested him " not to think it strange, if his advice and friendship were eagerly sought after;"—adding, " that the universal respect which his talents and his interest at Court had acquired, en-

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gaged her to address herself to him—that in a little time he should know who the person was that had presumed to solicit his good offices, and that perhaps he would not repent of having attended to her.” This letter, which was written in very indifferent French, was signed *La Fruëlen*. The Count was desired to return an answer to Mademoiselle La Fruëlen, at Bourdeaux.

A short time after this the Count received a letter from Prague, signed “ Le Comte J. de Weisendorff,” in which he was entreated to give the best advice in his power to Mademoiselle La Fruëlen—to interest himself warmly in her behalf—to write to Bourdeaux in her favour—and even to advance her money, to the amount of a thousand ducats, if she stood in need of it. The letter was concluded in these words: *When you shall know, Sir, who this stranger is, you will be delighted to think that you have served her, and grateful to those who have given you the opportunity of doing it.*

M. de Cobenzel replied to the Lady, that he was highly sensible of the honour of her good opinion—that he should be proud of assisting her with his advice, and of serving her to the utmost of his power: but that it was absolutely necessary he should in the first instance be informed of her real name.

After this the Count received a letter from Vienna, signed “ Le Comte Dietrichstein.” In this he was again requested to pay every possible attention to Mademoiselle La Fruëlen, and in particular to entreat her to be frugal. He answered this, as well as the former letter from Prague—but no notice was taken of his reply to either.

Meanwhile his epistolary intercourse with the young lady at Bourdeaux continued. Towards the end of the same year, the wife of a tradesman
of

of that city, named Madame L'Englumé, came to Brussels upon business—that business having introduced her to the Count de Cobenzel, she spoke to him of Mademoiselle La Fruëlen in terms of the highest praise. She extolled her beauty, her elegance; and above all, that prudence and propriety of conduct, which did so much honour to a person left at that tender age to her own disposal. She added, that the young lady had a house of her own, that she was generous, expensive, and even magnificent—that she had been three years at Bourdeaux—that the distinguished attention with which the Marechal de Richelieu treated her, the extreme resemblance of her features to those of the late Emperor, Francis the First, and the entire ignorance of the world as to her birth, gave rise to strange conjectures—That the young lady had often been questioned on the subject, but that she always took care to observe the most scrupulous silence as to her family.

In December, 1768, M. de Cobenzel received a very singular letter, dated, “VIENNA. *From my bed—two in the morning.*” In this, the Count was highly commended for the good advice he had given the young stranger, and requested to continue his attentions.

He was also charged to inculcate economy, and particularly admonished of the importance of the secret. This letter had no signature.

Some time afterwards, the young lady sent to M. de Cobenzel, enquiring whether he had not received a letter concerning her? He answered in the affirmative, and said that she had been recommended to his care in the strongest terms. She replied, “I am much obliged to you, Sir, for your goodness; but I will tell you honestly, that if I wanted any particular favour, I would rather address myself to God than to the saints!”

In the beginning of the year 1769, the Court received some dispatches from Vienna, which contained several very extraordinary circumstances respecting the stranger. The Court of Vienna had sent a requisition to that of Versailles, to arrest Mademoiselle La Fruelen; and to send her, under a strong guard, to Brussels, where she was to be examined by M. de Cobenzel and the First President, M. de Neny. Prince Charles, about the same time, received a letter from the Empress, enjoining him to be very careful that the prisoner should not escape; and desiring him not to spare either pains or expence in detaining her.—Her Majesty's letter concluded as follows:

"This wretch wishes to pass for the daughter of our late royal master.—If there was the least probability in the story, I would love her, and treat her like one of my own children: but I know it is an imposture; and I wish every possible effort to be made, that this unhappy creature may no longer profane the dear and venerable name of our departed Lord."—

The Empress recommended the strictest secrecy in carrying on the business; and added, that this adventure had already made too much noise, and that all Europe would soon ring of it.

It seems the Court of Vienna was informed of the affair in the following manner: While Joseph the Second was on his travels in Italy, the King of Spain received a letter, apparently written by his Imperial Majesty, informing him, in confidence, that his father, the late Emperor, had left a natural daughter, whose story was only known to his sister the Archduchess Marianne, himself, and a few faithful and confidential friends;—that the young lady had been most earnestly recommended to his care by his father; and that she was resident at Bourdeaux. He intreated the King of Spain

Spain to send for her, and give her an establishment at Madrid with some lady of rank, or in a convent, where she might be treated with the care and respect due to her birth, till some plan should be fixed on for the future happiness of her life.—He added, that he requested this mark of friendship of his Catholic Majesty, because he himself did not dare to undertake these kind offices for the person in question, lest the Empress should by some means or other hear of it, whom he wished to remain in perpetual ignorance of the story.

The King of Spain, thinking this letter very extraordinary, transmitted it to the Emperor himself, who was then at Milan; demanding some explanation of the matter. The Emperor, who had not written the letter, nor ever heard a syllable of the adventure, sent the packet to the Empress; who made instant inquiries about the stranger, and dispatched a messenger to Bourdeaux to seize her. She was accordingly arrested at her own house, in August 1769.

Fear and distress took off much of La Fruëlen's beauty; she had continual spasms in her stomach, attended with spitting of blood, which obliged her to travel very slowly. At length she arrived at Brussels, attended by M. de Poyot, an officer under M. Ferrand. While she was on her journey, and almost immediately before she quitted the French dominions, a person unknown, dressed like a courier, put a billet into her hands at the coach-window, and then fled with the utmost precipitation. She begged her guide to read the billet, which only contained these words—"My dear girl, every thing has been attempted to save you: keep up your spirits, and do not despair."—She protested that she neither knew the courier, nor the hand-writing.

On her arrival at Brussels, she was immediately taken to the hotel of the Count de Cobenzel.— She was dressed in a gown of grey taffeta, a black coat, and a veil of white gauze, which covered her face, and which she took off when she entered the Minister's apartment. Her figure would have interested the most insensible heart in her favour. She was tall, and elegantly formed; her air was at once simple and majestic; her complexion was fair; her arms were delicately turned; her hair was brown, and calculated to receive the embellishments of art to the greatest advantage. She had that freshness of colour which no borrowed tints can imitate; fine dark eyes, and a look which expressed every emotion of her soul. She spoke French with a German accent, and appeared much confused, but without any particular symptom of female weakness.

Her alarm was soon dissipated by that confidence which M. de Cobenzel so well knew how to inspire. In her letters she had always called him her father; when in his presence, she addressed him by the same endearing name; she would have kissed his hand, but he prevented her by catching her in his arms. He sat down near her; talked to her on the subject of her health; desired her to make herself perfectly easy; and told her she should have the utmost attention and the kindest treatment, if she would strictly adhere to truth. She repeated several times, "Yes, indeed, my dear father, I will inform you of every thing; I am a good girl, and never injured any human creature. It is true, I have contracted some debts; but what, was that a crime? I had been plentifully supplied with money, and I expected a continuation of my allowance." All her distress appeared to arise from the circumstance of her debts; those she considered as her
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her only faults, and as the sole cause of her being apprehended.

She expressed no concern whatever at her being a prisoner, and only asked M. de Coberzel if she might not remain at his house. The Count frankly told her that this was impossible; assuring her, at the same time, that she should be treated with all imaginable respect, in an apartment which he had prepared for her in the fortress of Monterel, at a very little distance from Brussels; and that if she wanted any thing, she had but to express her wish, and her commands should immediately be obeyed. He promised to wait on her there the next day; and she took her leave of him, to all appearance, in a state of perfect tranquillity.—She was conducted to Fort Monterel, under the guard of Major de Camerlang, a man of sense and good nature; and M. de Neny had taken care to provide a female attendant for her. The next day, the Count went to see her, and found her in very good spirits; she seemed delighted with her apartment, and pleased with the conduct of those about her. The Count offered her the use of any books from his library. She thanked him; but said she never had a moment which hung heavy on her hands, so much was her mind taken up with visionary projects for her future life: the truth was, she could neither read nor write. M. de Camerlang taught her to sign her name, while she was in confinement. The cause of this ignorance will presently be explained.—The next day her examination began. M. de Cobenzel and the President went to Fort Monterel at ten in the morning. The Count de Neny, who had not before seen the prisoner, was extremely surprised at her striking resemblance to the late Emperor. They asked her where she was born? She said she knew not,

not, but that she had been told the place where she was educated, was called Bohemia.—She was asked, if that place was a town; and what was the earliest incident in the course of her life that she could remember?—She said, that the place where she was brought up, was a little sequestered house in the country; that there was neither town nor village near it; and that before her inhabiting this house, she had not the least recollection of any thing which had happened to her. That in her infancy she had been under the care of two women, one about fifty years old, the other about thirty.—That she called the first *mama*, the second Catherine; that she slept in the apartment of the first-named woman, and that both of them treated her with much kindness and affection. That, from time to time, an Ecclesiastic (as she has since suspected, a Jesuit) came to say mass in an apartment in the house, and to teach her the catechism; that the woman whom she called *mama* had began to instruct her in reading and writing, but that the priest opposed it, from the moment it came to his knowledge; and from that time she was taught no more! However, she added, that he always treated her with infinite respect.

She said, that about a year after this, a handsome man, in a hunting suit, accompanied by another gentleman, dressed in the same manner, came to the house where she resided. That she was immediately sent for; when the stranger embraced her, placed her on his knee, caressed her much, and recommended it to her to be good and submissive. She doubts not that this person had seen her before, because she recollects that he thought her grown taller, and altered; but she never remembers having seen him at any former time.

About eighteen months afterwards he returned,
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accompanied by the same attendant as before, and wearing the very same dress. She said, that, at this second interview, the features of her unknown visitor made so strong an impression on her mind, that had she never seen him more, she should not have forgotten them. She says, that he was of a middling size, and rather corpulent, that he had an open countenance, a ruddy complexion, a dark beard, and a little white spot upon one of his temples. She observed, that M. de Neny bore some distant resemblance to the person she spoke of, particularly in the lower part of his face; she said further, that at this second interview, remarking somewhat red that appeared about the stranger's neck under his riding-coat, she asked him what it was? he replied, it was a mark of distinction worn by officers—she, ignorant in every particular, enquired what he meant by an *officer*? “They are,” said he, “Men of Honour, Galantry, and Spirit, whom you must love, because you are the daughter of an officer yourself.” She added, at this second visit she found herself extremely attached to the stranger; and that when he took his leave she shed a flood of tears; at which he appeared much affected, and promised her to return soon.

He did not keep his word; for he returned not till two years after, and when she reproached him with absenting himself so long, he told her, that at the time he had fixed for coming to her, he had been violently ill, in consequence of over-heating himself in the chase.

[N. B. Prince Charles recollected, that at a time corresponding with that above-mentioned, the Emperor was in fact taken ill on his return from hunting.]

This

This third interview, which was the last, furnishes the most interesting anecdotes. The stranger desired to be left alone with her. When he told her of his illness she shed tears; he was himself melted, and asked her why she wept; "Because I love you." He assured her that he felt equal love for her; that he would take care of her; would make her rich and happy; would give her a palace, money, and attendants; and that her domestics should wear yellow and blue liveries. He asked her, afterwards, if she did not wish to see the queen? she replied, she did not know what a queen meant. "A queen is the first lady in the kingdom, and highly to be respected as such; you would love her much if you knew her; but that, for the sake of her peace of mind, you must never do."——He then presented her with the two pictures, which she had sent from Bourdeaux to M. de Cobenzel. She said, she told the stranger, that one was his own picture; he allowed it, and bade her keep it as long as she lived, as well as that of the Empress: and a third picture, which he afterwards gave her of a female, whose features were half concealed by a veil. This, he told her, was her own mother. The pictures were in a blue silk purse which contained a great quantity of ducats. The stranger, when he quitted the young lady, assured her she should soon be happy, and not to have a wish ungratified; but that she must promise him *never to marry*, and to keep that vow always in her remembrance. After this he took leave of her with the utmost tenderness, and she was herself extremely affected.

She related, that in the interval between the stranger's first and second visit, there came one day, accompanied by two men, a lady, who asked to see her. The lady was dressed in a style
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of great simplicity: she was of moderate stature, fair, of a pleasing aspect, and rather inclining to corpulence. This lady looked at her with great earnestness, and began to weep; she asked her several indifferent questions, and then embracing her two or three times, said, "My child, you are indeed unhappy!"—Her emotion was so great, that she called for a glass of water to keep her from fainting; she drank it, and departed immediately. Mademoiselle La Fruëlen said, that she could not be positive, whether the picture which the stranger gave her at his last visit bore any resemblance to this lady or not.

When the examination had proceeded thus far, it was observed that the young prisoner began to prevaricate about the circumstances of her story. Yet even after this was discovered, she persisted in most solemnly declaring, that till now, and indeed till her quitting the house where she was educated, her narrative had been faithful in all its particulars. Every incident was thoroughly examined; the questions were put to her in every possible form to observe if she did not vary in her replies: but she always repeated the above facts with the same circumstances, and the same simplicity.

She then told the story of her departure from the place of her education, in words to the following purport.—That a little time after the stranger's last visit, the Ecclesiastic who had taken care of her from her infancy, came to inform her, that her Protector was no more; and that before he expired he had ordered her to be conducted to some convent in France—the priest said, "that she must set forward on her journey in a few days, and that he came to measure her for some apparel; which he afterwards did, with a ribbon

ribbon he had brought with him for that purpose. A week after this he arrived in a post-chaise, bringing with him four complete dresses, viz. two pelisses, a black gown, and a red one; till now she had only worn a dimity undress. The priest immediately made a parcel of all the young lady's little property.—She put on a blue pelisse; he handed her and her attendant Catherine into the carriage and then got into it himself.

She wept grievously at parting with the woman she had called “mama;” but besides what she felt on account of the separation, she was terribly afraid of the convent. The enquiries she had made of Catherine and her mama (in the week preceding her departure) had given her most frightful ideas of the life to which she thought herself condemned for the remainder of her days. She could not tell what towns she passed through; but she said, that on her arrival at Hamburgh, the priest, after dismissing her attendant, had made her embark on board a vessel freighted for Bourdeaux. The moment she took ship, a man, to all appearance about fifty years old, came to offer her his services, saying, that he would take care of her during her voyage. On their arrival at Bourdeaux, this man, who had acquired great influence over her, took her to the house of a German merchant, who was settled in that city; and the wife of this merchant placed her with Madame Guillaumot, with whom she remained, during the whole time of her stay in Bourdeaux. A fortnight after her arrival at this lady's house, a letter was brought to her, addressed “to Mademoiselle Felicia Juliana de Schonau,” a name which at her leaving Bohemia, the Priest told her she was in future to consider as her own. Madame Guillaumot, by her desire, read this letter
to

to her.—It contained rules for her future conduct, and assurances that she should be amply supplied with money: she was directed by the writer to remain with Madame Guillaumot; but she was advised to persuade that lady to dismiss all her other boarders, and to devote her attention to her alone. This letter was concluded without either signature or date, and it enjoined her to be discreet, and to forbear making too curious enquiries.—Some days after this, a gentleman came to her house, and, without a preface, put a purse of a thousand louis-d'ors into her hand; only adding, that he was commanded to advance her that sum for the purchase of furniture. She asked him, from whence the money came; he begged her to make herself easy, and not to be curious.—She says she has reason to think this man was an Ecclesiastic. She then took a house and furnished it. Madame Guillaumot went thither as her companion; and she lived at Bourdeaux amongst persons of the first consequence, till the day of her confinement.

The manner in which the stranger told the tale of her embarking at Hamburgh and her arrival at Bourdeaux appearing highly improbable, M. de Cobenzel told her it was evident that her story was untrue.—He bade her remember what he had said to her on the day of her arrival at Brussels; “that the only way to obtain the favour and protection of the Empress, was to be ingenuous and sincere”—that it was on this condition alone he had offered her his best services; but that, as he found she had deceived him, he should now abandon her to all the consequences of her imposture. As the Count said this, he looked at her with a fixed and severe countenance, which disconcerted her the more, as till now she had only seen that air of tenderness and politeness,

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which

which marked his general character. She was all confusion; and M. de Cobenzel having risen from his seat, as if about to depart, she held him by his cloaths, and throwing herself at his feet, said, with many tears, that it was true she had much to relate to him, but she could say no more in the presence of Monsieur de Neny's secretary. As soon as that gentleman had left the room, she fell down again on her knees, and with renewed expressions of grief, entreated M. de Cobenzel to take pity upon her; confessed that she had deceived him in the account of her embarkation at Hamburgh; but called Heaven to witness, that all which she had said of her education in Bohemia was true to the most minute circumstance. She afterwards always persisted in this assertion, nor ever varied in the smallest particular, when cross-examined at different times as to the former part of her life.—And thus she told anew the story of her departure:

When the priest came to take her from her house in Bohemia, he told her, that he was going to conduct her to a convent in France. Ignorant as she was, the little which Catharine and her mama had told her of a religious life, taught her to consider a convent as an horrible prison, from which there was no escape: and this idea had so disturbed her mind, that from the moment of her quitting her habitation in Bohemia, she had formed the project of flying, as soon as possible, from such captivity. During her journey to Hamburgh, she found no opportunity of executing her design—but her alarm was so much increased, when on her arrival in that city she saw the sea and the ships, that on the eve of the day fixed for her departure she rose from Catharine's side as she slept, made a little parcel of one gown and some linen, took the blue purse with the three pictures, and the hundred ducats which the stranger had given her, and at break of day

day left the city. She walked a long time; *she* spent with fatigue and terror, *she* took refuge in the barn of a farmer, and there fell asleep. The owner of the premises found her, and, struck with her youth and beauty, civilly offered her a little room, and the best bed in his house, which she accepted.

Her fears not suffering her to continue so near to *Hamburg*, she soon quitted this retreat. She wished to give some proof of her gratitude to the honest people who had afforded her protection; but they would accept of nothing. From hence, mounted on a wretched carriage, she took the road towards *Sweden*. The third day of her journey, she fell from her vehicle, and received so dangerous a wound in her head, that it was necessary to take her to a neighbouring inn, and call in the assistance of a surgeon.

It happened, that a Dutch family called at the inn in their way to *Pomerania* and *Sweden*; these people defrayed the expences of her sickness, and, out of compassion, suffered her to join their travelling party. (At her examination, she told the names of these *Hollanders*, as well as the *Lutheran* priest who was with them, and who at this present time is private tutor to a merchant's children in *Hamburg*.) When she arrived at *Stockholm*, she quitted her fellow travellers, and went to lodge at the house of a German woman, whose husband had a small post under government. This woman, happily for *Mademoiselle La Fruëlen*, was a person of great integrity, and conceived the tenderest friendship for her. While she resided here, her hair-dresser told her one day, that the *Count de Belgioioso*, Imperial Minister at *Stockholm*, was making strict enquiries after a young lady that had eloped from *Hamburg*. *La Fruëlen*, who began to form an idea of the consequences of her flight, and whom the apprehensions of poverty terrified

still

still more than the thoughts of a convent, told her informer, that she was the person sought after, and permitted him to make this discovery to the Ambassador. The next day she received a billet from that Minister, inviting her to his house. The billet was read to her by a girl that waited upon her, named Sophia; she did not hesitate a moment, but repaired that day to the Count de Belgioioso. He received her with great respect; asked her the circumstances of her departure from Hamburg; and it being (as he thought by her replies) evident that she was the person whom he sought, he told her, that he was instructed to take the greatest care of her, and that he would go to see whether she was in convenient lodgings. He offered her money, which she accepted, for the blue purse was entirely empty. M. de Belgioioso went to visit her the next day; he told her she must stay no longer in such a place, and that he would procure her a more commodious apartment near his own house.

In two days she went to this apartment; it was at the house of a tradesman: and Sophia continued about her person.—M. de Belgioioso sent her a lacquey, and furnished her with provisions from his own table. Not long afterwards, he told her that she had been still more strongly recommended to his protection, and that she must take up her abode at his house; and accordingly she went thither the same afternoon.

She says, that while she was at the house of M. de Belgioioso, she was so affected by the sight of a picture, perfectly resembling the stranger who came three times to see her at her dwelling in Bohemia, that she swooned away upon the spot. (The Count de Belgioioso has by letter confirmed this assertion; and it seems the picture was that of the Emperor Francis.) It was with the greatest difficulty that they recovered her from her fainting-fit; and

and a violent fever was the consequence, which very nearly proved fatal to her. She says she grew taller during this illness, which lasted six weeks, and was so much altered, that she appeared to be thirty years old; though she could not at this time have been above sixteen.

When she was perfectly recovered, the Ambassador told her, he had received advice from Hamburg, that she had quitted that city in company with a young Englishman. She denied it in the most solemn manner, because she had no English acquaintance whatever: but M. de Belgioioso persisted in his accusation so long, that, wearied out with constant persecution on the subject, she confessed herself guilty of a crime which she knew was falsely laid to her charge.

This rash confession, as well as many other instances of imprudence in her conduct, she attempted to palliate, in a manner that very strongly proved her simplicity and ignorance of the world. Her ignorance indeed extended to such a degree, that M. St. Gere, Assistant to the Imperial Consul at Bourdeaux, who was sent for to Brussels during the prisoner's examination, deposed, that while he was her secretary at Bourdeaux, she wished him to sign a feigned name to a letter—and when he remonstrated, that she could not make use of a name that was not her own, she replied, "Who can forbid my doing any thing that I wish? May I not assume any name, any signature, at my pleasure?"

It must be observed, that about the time of her elopement from Hamburg, the daughter of a merchant in that city had been carried off by a young Englishman; and this adventure, being confounded with that of our heroine, gave the Ambassador those suspicions which she had the folly to confirm. It is evident, that after this confession,

Mr. de Belgioioso believed her to be the merchant's daughter, and not the young lady who had been recommended to his care: because a little time after this, he told her he was mistaken as to her person, and advised her to return to Hamburg. He gave her twenty-five louis-d'ors for her travelling expenses, and entrusted her to the care of a merchant who was then on his return to that city. On her arrival at Hamburg, she anxiously sought after those persons, whom she had quitted with so much precipitation; she walked every day on the quay, and in the most frequented parts of the town.

At this time, a man, in appearance about fifty years old, and plainly dressed, who had followed her at a distance for several days, at last accosted her, and proposed to her to go to Bourdeaux. She consented to it more readily, because she recollected that the priest had wished her to embark for that place; and she supposed, that by following the plan at first marked out for her, she should the more easily meet with those who interested themselves about her fate. The man whom she met on the quay embarked with her; her voyage was prosperous in every particular, and he attended her during the course of it in the manner she had at first related. The prisoner always persisted in saying that every circumstance she had mentioned, of her arrival at Bourdeaux, and her adventures in that city, was most scrupulously true.

Soon after she had taken a house of her own, to which Madame Guillaumot accompanied her, she received an anonymous letter, in which she was commanded to go to the Duke de Richelieu, and ask that protection, of which she stood so much in need. The writer pressed her the more earnestly to do this, because the Duke was already acquainted with the particulars of her story. Accordingly she went to the Duke's palace. He informed her that he

he had received a letter from the Princess d'Auerberg, recommending Mademoiselle de Schoeau in the strongest terms to his care. He made her a thousand offers of service, and according to his custom, said more than a woman of honour ought to hear. She burst into tears, and on her knees implored his pity; and the Duke on his part made apologies for his imprudence.

A few days after this he came to her house, and earnestly recommended it to her to learn the French language, which as yet she understood very imperfectly. M. de Richelieu paid her several other visits, and always treated her with the highest respect. She was a constant guest at all his entertainments, and when any questions were asked him concerning her, he made this uniform reply—“ *She is a lady of great distinction.*”

The rest of the examination consisted of minute circumstances, foreign to our purpose; and chiefly respected the company with whom she associated during her residence at Bourdeaux. It must not however be forgotten, that she had two very advantageous offers of marriage: the one from M. de —, the other from the nephew of M. de Ferand, a counsellor of the parliament of Bourdeaux. She refused both; conceiving herself bound to perpetual celibacy by the promise she had made the stranger in Bohemia.

It is necessary to mention her pecuniary resources. We have already observed, that while she lived with Madame Guillaumot, a person unknown presented her with a thousand louis-d'ors. This same person brought her several sums of money afterwards, at different times; and she received through this channel about a hundred and fifty thousand livres, without ever learning, or being able to discover to whom she was obliged for this noble allowance.—As all this tended to confirm her in her
ideas

ideas that she belonged to a very wealthy family, she spent this money as fast as she received it. On a sudden her remittances stopped. She had little or no money by her; so that in a short time, as she made no alteration whatever in her style of living, she contracted debts to the amount of sixty thousand livres, which remained undischarged at the time of her being arrested at Bourdeaux.

In the desperate situation to which the menaces of her creditors reduced her, she took the wild resolution of fabricating those letters, which when presented to her at her examination, she owned were dictated by herself. As, first, the letter to M. de Cobenzel, dated, "*VIENNA—From my bed—two in the morning.*"—Another, signed, "*Le Comte J. de Weissendorf.*"—Another to the Emperor, addressed to Florence. Another to the Bavarian Minister at Paris. And, lastly, the letter to the King of Spain, which had led to the discovery. But though she frankly confessed the having sent all these letters, she declared at the same time her perfect ignorance of that signed "*Le Comte de Dietrichstein*"—and of several others, which the Counts de Cobenzel and de Neny had received from time to time concerning her.

It is observable, that her simplicity was so great, as to make it impossible to explain to her how highly criminal she had been, in procuring forged letters on subjects of such importance. She made the same reply now that she had done to M. St. Gere, at Bourdeaux—Nay, she innocently persisted in it, that she thought she had acted right; because the extraordinary education that had been given her, the conjectures she had formed of her parentage, the portraits which gave such weight to those conjectures, and the considerable sums that had been remitted to her, could not but lead her to suspect, that she was in point of fact the late Emperor's daughter.

daughter. She declared that she had never uttered her thoughts to any human creature; but finding herself all at once utterly forsaken, she concluded the person was dead who had been commissioned to furnish her with money. And as she supposed that this person alone was acquainted with the place of her abode, she concluded that her supplies only ceased because her residence was no longer known. However, as she thought it highly probable that her father might have entrusted more than one person with the secret of her birth, she hoped, by writing to all the most illustrious servants of the House of Austria, to find some one who, knowing her history, might place her in that situation which her father had designed for her. She said further, that she did not write these letters in her own name, because she would not expose herself to the troublesome curiosity of those who, not being in the secret, would immediately make inquiry about her birth. That if but one of those letters had fallen into the hands of any person acquainted with her story, that person would immediately have known more particulars of her life than she herself could know. In the mean time, her suspicions being unsupported by positive proof, all that she could say would not prevent her passing for an impostor. She added, that a strong argument of her conscious innocence, and of her firm persuasion that she was really the Emperor's daughter, might be drawn from the circumstance of her having pointed out the place of her abode in all her letters; every one of which tended to put her in the power of the Court of Vienna, that court which was alone interested in punishing a fraud of this nature. She affirmed, that she never had consulted any person whatever as to the steps she had taken; and she particularly denied having written the letter, signed "The Princess d'Aversberg," which the Duke de Richelieu received soon after her arrival at Bourdeaux.

The examination, after twenty-four sittings, being entirely finished, Messrs. de Cobenzel and de Neny seriously considered what steps were most proper to be taken in consequence of it. The Court having desired them to give their opinion, they agreed, "That the most prudent measure would be to place the poor girl in some distant convent, and there keep her, till time should throw some light on this mysterious affair." At the moment when this opinion was to have been transmitted to Vienna, M. de Neny received a letter from his father, (private secretary to the Empress) which stated, that from the examination, which had been sent from time to time to court, her Imperial Majesty had formed a very disadvantageous opinion of the stranger; and that she was determined to treat her with the utmost severity. After reading these dispatches, M. de Neny's sentiments were so entirely changed, that he proposed sending the unhappy prisoner to Bourdeaux, and there putting her into the power of her creditors. He even sent this to Vienna as his opinion. But the Count de Cobenzel, whom no consideration could induce to change those sentiments which honour and humanity dictated, feared not, in behalf of innocence, to displease his sovereign herself; and in a letter to the Empress, strongly inveighed against M. de Neny's opinion, and advised that the unhappy prisoner should be sent to some convent. But this advice was not followed, and that of the Count de Neny was impracticable. The Duke de Choiseul refused to grant the passport necessary to conduct her to Bourdeaux. In vain M. de Barré (Secretary to the Embassy at Paris, and Chargé des Affaires in the Count de Mercy's absence) represented to the Duke that her creditors would be injured, if their debtor was not restored to them; he seemed to think it a plea of no consequence, and persisted in his refusal.

The

The day before M. de Cobenzel's death, after he had received the sacrament, he said to a confidential friend, who had been made acquainted with every circumstance respecting the stranger: "I have just received dispatches from Vienna, charging me to acquaint the Court with the prisoner's whole history—by no means to dismiss her; and to take no step without fresh orders." He alluded to a letter just received from M. de Kaunitz. The Count immediately burnt it; adding, by way of reflection, "*You see an honest man's opinion will sometimes prevail.*"

He died the next day: and it is probable, that but for this misfortune, the affair would have ended in a very different manner. If similar orders came to any other person, they came too late.

Four days after his death, the stranger was taken out of prison; a Sub-Lieutenant of the Marechaussee of Brabant conducted her to Quiévrain, a small town between Mons and Valenciennes, (about a day's journey from Calais, or Ostend); fifty louis-d'ors were put into her hand; and she was abandoned to her wretched destiny!

Thus far the French Narrative;—and we think it highly probable, that she was shortly after brought into this country, where she was cruelly abandoned by some vile seducer; and which, no doubt, caused the calamity into which she fell. Many endeavours were used to trace her family, by describing her situation in the public papers both here and on the Continent, but without effect; and there is now very little prospect of the secret, whatever it was, being farther elucidated—for poor Louisa is no more!

Having remained for a considerable time under the care of Mr. Henderson, already mentioned, and supported by subscription, she was at length removed, as incurable, to Guy's Hospital, in the Borough

Borough of Southwark ; where she died rather suddenly on the 19th of December, 1801, and was buried in the ground belonging to that Hospital on the 23d.

The same kind and much the same degree of mental derangement remained with this poor departed child of misery to the last. The contraction of her limbs, from the exposure to cold in the open fields, and from her constant propensity to remain inactive, rendered her an object of the strongest pity. The change was therefore merciful ; her life was a scene of misery ; and not to be desired by those who witnessed her sufferings for the last twenty-five years ! She was first discovered under the hay-stack about the year 1776.

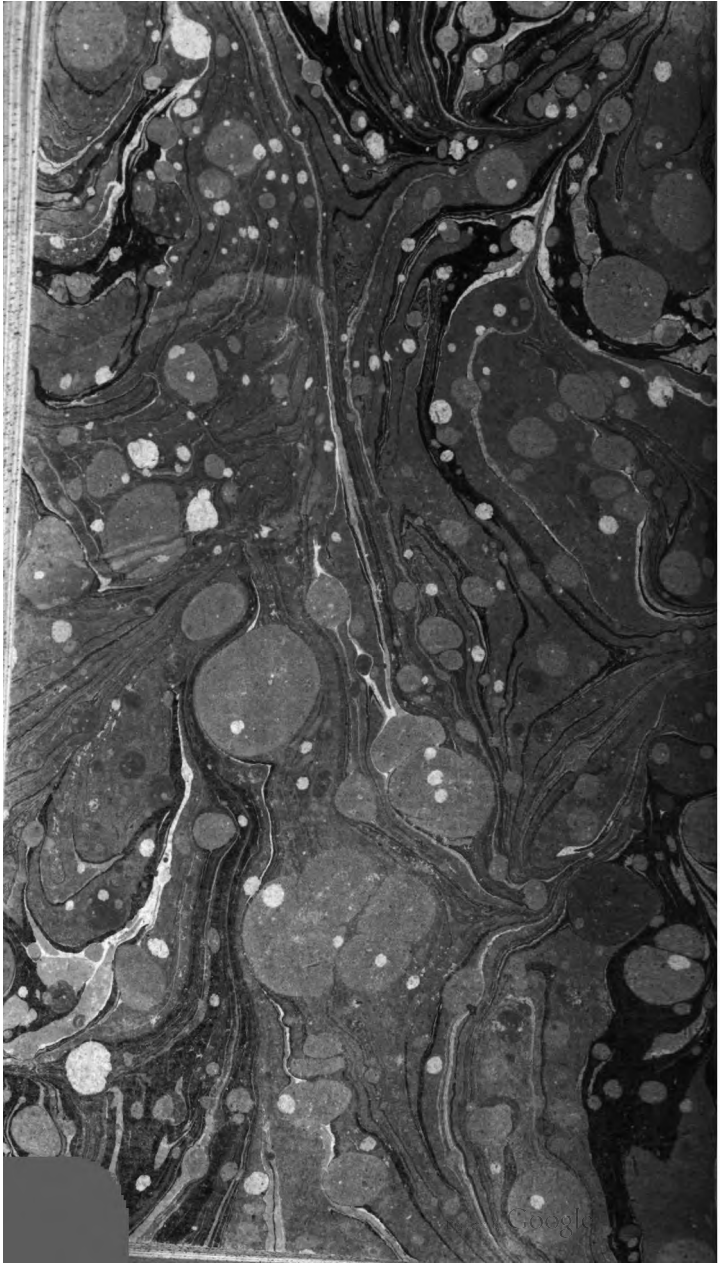
It is but justice to mention, that a certain sum was allowed annually by the benevolent Miss Hannah Moore, towards cloathing, &c. for poor Louisa, whose funeral expences where also defrayed by that lady.

The following appropriate Epitaph, we understand, was written in Bath, and transmitted from that city :

IN yonder dust, unmark'd for public fame,
 Low rest the relics of poor LOUISA's frame.
 Poor hapless sufferer, of the maniac line !
 Thy wrongs no more a tortur'd breast confine.
 Enough for thee, that ling'ring sorrow's breath
 Found final rescue in the boon of death !
 Censor'd be they, who sought thy soul's relief ;
 Tormented they, who overwhelm'd with grief !
 Accurs'd the crime, that 'rest thy reason's ray,
 Though thou be ransom'd for eternal day !
 And where frail Innocence would Vice repel,
 May guardian angels thy sad story tell !

FINIS.

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